

Workplace Diversity and its effects on team dynamics and productivity

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Abstract

This essay examines workplace diversity, focusing on the recently discussed growing challenges. In light of the demographic differences among employees in terms of age, gender, race, ethnicity, and culture that typically influence productivity and business performance, such a diverse or heterogeneous work environment is largely a result of trade liberalisation and globalisation, which enable productive factor inputs to travel freely between countries. The inclusion of workforce diversity comes with some benefits, such as the formation of a collaborative and team-based learning environment, better productivity, and higher profits. It is important to be aware that there are certain new problems with workforce diversity, such as a multicultural work environment, a vast talent pool that may be leveraged for innovation and creation, inter-functional coordination, complexity, and workplace discrimination. Globalisation, migration, the ageing population, outsourcing, women's employment, etc. all contribute to these problems. An organisation should have a framework for managing workplace diversity; this will allow for the best resource allocation to build a multicultural workforce that is engaged and productive.

Keywords: Workplace Diversity, Discrimination, Globalization, Multicultural, Inter-functional, Team Participation

I. Introduction

All people are unique. They differ in terms of gender, culture, race, and other social, physical, and psychological traits. However, depending on personal viewpoints and preconceptions, our attitudes towards those distinctions might be either negative or good. The global economy is undergoing a dramatic change as the twenty-first century begins. We are going towards a society in which obstacles to cross-border trade and investments are falling, perceiver distance is decreasing as a result of improvements in transportation and telecommunications technology, or, to put it another way, we may say that globalisation is making the world into a small, interconnected community daily. In today's interconnected world, an American might go to work in a German-designed vehicle that was put together in Mexico using parts manufactured in the US and Japan from materials such as Korean steel and Malaysian rubber. India is currently acknowledged by the international community as one of the major economic forces in the globe. Many businesses are travelling to India to investigate this possibility. Employing an effective and efficient workforce that can handle such a competitive atmosphere is essential for organisations to survive in this type of fiercely competitive market. Diversity in the workforce is essential for every organisation. In the current environment, businesses that employ quality workers who are competitive in the marketplace, regardless of their age, attitude, language, gender, religion, or caste, can only succeed. A valuable resource for any organisation is its human resources. By alone, capital and physical resources cannot boost efficiency or the rate of return on investment.

II. Diversity in the Organization: The Adverse Effects on Team Performance

A diverse group makes it simple to split the work among the team members according to their skill sets. When one individual excels in one area and another has a talent in a different area, both of their skills can be employed equally to complete a task. As a result of the job being distributed effectively, employees can develop their talents more quickly, and team performance increases. It helps the team identify its strengths when the many talents and skills that members of the group possess are appropriately examined. Some team members might not be as adept at a certain task as others. By cooperating as a team, they can also learn more. As a result, the team not only possesses a diversity of abilities, but it can also cooperate to sharpen and enhance the group's skills. Having teams with a variety of talents and skills is great for the organisation since it will eventually provide a huge talent pool. Because of this, an organisation can increase the talent they have by hiring a variety of employees in a group.

1. Stand out from your competitors

A company's ability to differentiate out from rivals is ultimately aided by having a varied personnel. It is not surprising that the majority still do not recognise the value of having a varied group. Diversity does not appear to be a top focus for most businesses. A business can generate more original ideas and access a larger talent pool with a diversified crew. These two elements contribute to raising the team's total performance and, consequently, the organization's performance. Everyone on a diverse team thinks creatively and differently, which allows them to produce results that no one else can and come up with solutions that are more original.

2. Foster a sense of inclusivity

It is not surprising that when businesses appear to prioritise having a diverse workforce, employees experience a sense of inclusivity. People from diverse cultures, races, or genders feel cared for and connected to an organisation when they learn that it encourages diversity. In the end, it motivates staff to work harder inside their organisations to improve their individual performance, which enhances team performance. An employee can see the value of inclusivity in their organisation when they are placed in a diverse group with their colleagues. Therefore, the importance of inclusivity for the organisation is repeatedly reinforced when working in a diverse team. Each employee aspires to do better on an individual basis, but they also work to enhance group cohesion and communication. They work hard to enhance all aspects of their performance, including teamwork.

3. Diversity prevents grouping

When working with varied individuals, it can be simple to create groupings based on possible points of commonality. The herding instinct is what is known for this. To ensure that the team is actually diverse and that the team members communicate with one another, a diverse team forces employees to overcome this propensity.

4. Diversity leads to better conflict resolution strategy

Conflict will inevitably occur in a diverse workplace. It cannot be avoided. Therefore, rather than attempting to prevent conflict entirely, organisations should instead work to develop tactics that will

aid in reducing incidences of conflict and educate themselves on how to handle conflict and stop it from escalating.

As a result, when managing a diverse workforce, the manager's conflict resolution abilities are sharpened, which ultimately results in a workplace with less tension.

5. Diversity in the workplace leads to genuinely inclusive environment

Hiring workers with various backgrounds is simple. However, if the workforce at the workplace does not appreciate diversity and inclusivity, having a varied workplace is meaningless. A diversified staff can assist combat this issue. Each team member can interact one on one with the other when working with teammates from different backgrounds. This helps them get over whatever prejudice they might have and improves their comprehension of various cultures, as well as their values and customs.

III. Ways to Increase Workplace Diversity

1. Leverage diverse job boards. Post job postings on websites that focus on diversity. Examples of these include Recruit Disability, which assists with finding suitable employees with disabilities, Diversity Working, one of the largest online diversity job boards, and HBCU, a network of students and alumni from historically black colleges and universities.

2. Highlight diversity on the career page on your website. Make sure the diversity statement and any ongoing initiatives for your organisation are prominently displayed on your career page and included in each job description that is being offered.

3. Provide targeted internships and scholarships. Employees from underrepresented groups should be given high-value internships and scholarships so they can develop more swiftly in important positions inside the company.

4. Offer diverse mentorships. Mentorship programmes foster closer relationships between employees while ensuring that everyone has the chance to succeed. Diversity can be promoted by establishing an inclusive mentorship programme.

5. Conduct diversity training. It's likely that diversity training will be needed for the executive team and other leaders. This will probably shock them when it highlights their flaws. They can then use their newly acquired knowledge to start effective cultural sensitivity training across the organisation.

IV. Cons of informational diversity

It's not always useful to be diverse. Having a diverse team increases the likelihood of conflict. Conflict typically arises when people's personal interests or demands lead to discrepancies in their perspectives on the subject at hand or the activity at hand. It is expected that members of a varied team will each have various priorities and viewpoints regarding how a work should be completed.

Different backgrounds give rise to informational variety. While this could be advantageous in that it encourages members to think of more original solutions to the problems at hand, it can also be detrimental to team performance because it can lead to conflict. There can be a lot of disagreement over which remedy is best when everyone has a different answer to the same issue. It can be difficult to come up with a solution as a team because various people have different viewpoints on the same problem.

In actuality, it can also promote a feeling of poor self-esteem and animosity towards the other member when one member's answer is chosen over the other. As a result, the problem must be resolved successfully.

1. Differences in goals and values

Goals and values within a team may also differ. Conflict that comes from this can be very detrimental to the team. A team needs a homogeneous set of goals in order to be effective. Without a clear team goal, each team member may be working towards a different outcome, which can ultimately result in a decline in team performance. The communication within a team suffers without agreement on a single objective. Therefore, for diversity in a team to be productive, all members must concur on a single team aim so that everyone is aware of one another's intentions.

2. Differences in communication

In each situation, communication is crucial. However, each member in a diverse team with members from various nationalities and backgrounds may have a different communication style. Due to their upbringing, certain individuals may communicate in a more direct and authoritative manner that some team members may find impolite or brash.

On the other hand, someone else might communicate more subtly. When this happens, a person could feel awkward speaking up for oneself, which makes them less inclined to express their disagreements when they do arise.

Understanding the other team members can be challenging when there is a communication barrier, which can have a negative impact on team morale and productivity. Therefore, while diversity may result in certain positive developments, it is useless without a good means of communication.

By adopting the following strategies, these shortcomings can be handled easily:

Set roles for the group: Each team member's position should be clearly stated. This makes it possible for everyone to concentrate on their individual jobs while also collaborating as a team. It is simpler for each team member to concentrate on their specific task when duties are clearly defined as opposed to trying to take on as much as they can to establish their usefulness.

Set ground rules: It's crucial to establish ground rules for a diverse team. A group conversation can soon descend into chaos in the absence of rules, which is not what you would desire. Because of this, each member is more likely to abide by the rules when there are explicit ground rules and a code of behaviour. A clear set of ground rules makes it simpler for each participant to comprehend how they should behave.

Improve communication: Lack of efficient communication is a major cause of disputes in heterogeneous teams. Therefore, it is imperative that you seek to improve employee communication when leading a diverse workplace or team. This is accomplished rapidly with the aid of team building exercises and by clearly communicating the team's objective to each member.

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